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LOS ANGELES COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND FIRE DEPARTMENT ISSUE WILDFIRE SAFETY TIPS

Every year, many families vacationing or living near the forest, rural areas or remote mountain sites lose their homes and possessions due to wildfires. What causes wildfires? Prolonged drought, lightning, man-made accidents, deteriorating forests, high winds and housing patterns.

“With the recent wildfires that impacted the unincorporated area communities of Castaic Lake, South El Monte/South San Gabriel and San Gabriel Mountain areas, Los Angeles County wants to remind residents the time is now to prepare especially if it involves evacuations,” said Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management Director Jeff L. Reeb.

The Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and Fire Department have teamed up together in providing the following safety tips to help you prepare for wildfires:

Ready: Create a Defensible Space. A defensible space is the area around a structure free of flammable plants and objects that creates a zone in which firefighters can operate safely in order to protect a home during a wildfire. This space is wide enough to prevent direct flame impingement and reduce the amount of radiant heat reaching the structure.

Set: Prepare your family by creating a disaster plan that includes meeting locations and communication plans. Exercise your disaster plan regularly so that your family is familiar with it and knows what to do.

Go: By leaving early, you will give your family the best chance of surviving a wildfire. You also help firefighters by keeping roads clear of congestion, enabling them to move more freely and do their jobs.

Stay Informed and Connected: Register your cellular telephone numbers and e-mail addresses online at Alert LA County, the County’s mass notification system at <http://www.lacounty.gov/emergency/alert-la>. For seniors, persons with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, register online for Specific Needs Awareness Planning at <https://snap.lacounty.gov>.

Los Angeles County residents and businesses, including persons with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, may call 211 LA County for emergency preparedness information, and other referral services. The toll-free 2-1-1 number is available 24 hours a day and seven days a week. 211 LA County services can also be accessed at <http://211la.org>. For disaster/emergency preparedness information, please access <http://lacoa.org> and/or <http://espfocus.org>.

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